



CHALLENGES ON HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Disability in advanced education has various ramifications from that of school Education. Advanced education builds the opportunity of employability, hence, asserting stately life for the people with inabilities. While going through the strategies and projects in India it is observed that not much has been finished in that frame of mind of disabilities and advanced education. There are number of gatherings chipping away at the school training of kids with disabilities. This has not deciphered in that frame of mind of understudies to advanced education in view of different reasons. Infrastructural offices inside organizations, mentalities towards people with inabilities, transportation offices, and absence of help administrations are a couple of regions, which ruin the section of understudies with incapacities into advanced education.



KEY WORDS: *Disability, Higher Education, Challenges, Problems.*

INTRODUCTION:

Education for understudies with disabilities has for some time been an issue of worry in India, as well as in abroad. An individual with a disabilities concentrating on in standard instructive foundations encounters numerous troubles in exploring through the basic course of the Indian schooling system. Advanced education has seen a outlook change in India since the mid-1980s. There has been a gigantic development in understudy numbers with diminished financing north of 10 years. It is a worldwide situation that main restricted consideration has been put on resolving the issues of access, maintenance, movement also, interest of understudies with disabilities inside advanced education organizations. Inside this requesting setting, pressure has additionally been applied to instructive organizations to further develop openness for disabilities individuals, most as of late after India turned into the signatory to United Countries Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in September, 2007. There are numerous approaches and acts in India leaning toward the instruction of understudies with disabilities, it is seen that as not much has been finished in that frame of mind of handicap and advanced education.

Education is very important aspect for every person despite of gender, race, economic and social status, and disability. In the context of Education, Equity is a commitment of the public education system in the direction of social justice to persons with disabilities. Equity deliberations in higher

education assume a variety of dimensions including that of gender, socio-economic status and disability. Education gives the trust for liberation, upliftment and enlightenment of the persons with disabilities. In higher education Disability has different consequences from that of school education. The world is still struggling for free, equitable and quality education for everybody, from basic elementary education, secondary and finally higher education based on Education for All (EFA) goals. These goals have been adopted in many countries including India. As reported in the Education For All Global Monitoring Report (2010) reaching the marginalized children with disabilities remains one of the main problems leading to wide exclusion of the group from quality education.

Students with disabilities face particular challenges in higher education not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings, but also in relation to much wider access issues concerning the curriculum adaptation and accommodation, teaching, learning and assessment. These reasons become the eligibility criteria to scrutinize the ability of higher education to include a diverse range of learners. This has led to the emphasis on initiatives to widen access to higher education to individuals with disabilities. A positive attitude and self-advocacy skills were seen as the most important factors in determining the success of students with disabilities in higher education. Physical Inaccessibility: Students with disabilities continue to encounter physical barriers to educational services, such as a lack of ramps and/or elevators in multi-level buildings, heavy doors, inaccessible washrooms, and/or inaccessible transportation to and from institution.

TECHNOLOGY

Using a range of technology in higher education was the momentum and has been increasing from last two decades but students with disabilities are still finding difficult to utilize such technology due to various reasons. To include some technological solution in the higher educational process especially for students with disabilities requires in many cases an appropriate financial budget but also appropriate manpower with skills needed for the effective use of the newly adopted technology such as assistive technology. The very question about effective usage of technology has been pointed out in various contexts, although there has been an increase in adoption of various technological solutions in higher education like assistive technology, still there is a question about the effective usage of this assistive technology regarding making students with disabilities' learning experience better. Students with different types of disabilities need special methods of teaching which can in some cases also help the students without disabilities to better understand some particular topics. The main problem that can be point out when talking about usage of different technological solutions is the very application of this technology

Accommodation Process: Students with disabilities often encounter delays at many stages of the accommodation process. They have difficulties in the processing of claims for scholarships and concessions. Many of the times professional assessments are not carried out on time. Delay in the provision of special education programs and services are also observed. Lack of Individualization: Some funding schemes rely on pre-set categories and labels, and emphasize student "weakness" rather than strength. Suspension and expulsion policies are at times rigidly applied and do not take into account a student's individual circumstances. At all levels of education, there needs to be a greater recognition of the context in which discrimination occurs.

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Negative Attitudes and Stereotypes: Students with disabilities continue to face negative attitudes and stereotypes in the education system. Lack of knowledge about and sensitivity to disability issues on the

part of some educators, staff and students can make it difficult for students with disabilities to access educational services equally.

Basically the answers provided by respondents (Table 1) indicated that there were eight common challenges faced by students in higher education namely: cognitive challenge, becoming an active learner, coping with reading materials, instructional problem, language barrier, time management, burden of assignments.

DISABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education has its own importance in terms of employability, political power and national development. "Higher Education being at the apex of the educational system is an essential input for meeting the manpower requirements of the highest calibre in the crucial areas of national development. It is also an important contributory factor for ensuring social justice by providing vertical mobility to deprived sections of society by making higher levels of knowledge accessible to them and, in the process, improving quality of life of the nation as a whole" (Azad 2008 p.19). Diversity is seen in the college campuses. There are students who may be disadvantaged in many ways for example a student may belong to a Scheduled Caste and also has a disability. The situation is more deprived if the Scheduled caste student with disability is a girl. Institutions need to be ready to cater to the issues of such students. Warnock committee report 1978 emphasizes the importance, of reassessing needs of students with disabilities well before they enter into the world of higher education. Disability Service providers in Higher Education must recognize the need for multicultural awareness and prepare themselves for the pivotal role in the success of minority students with disabilities. College campuses plays pivotal role in the awareness and sensitization of issues. College campuses were centers of activism for the new movement.

CHALLENGES

1. Moving away from home
2. Understanding and working through the transfer process
3. Securing financial support
4. Meeting the admissions requirements for specific degree programs such as Engineering, Textiles, etc.,
5. Adjusting to differences in disability documentation requirements. For instance a person with severely low vision may be using the disability documentation of legally blind for availing government scholarships.
6. Adjusting to differences in the disabled student services offered as many of the higher educational institutions do not have relevant support services pertaining to specific disabilities

PROBLEMS FACED BY DISABLED STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Disability in higher education has different implications from that of school Education. Higher education increases the chance of employability, thus, affirming dignified life for the persons with disabilities. While going through the policies and programmes in India it is found that not much has been done in the field of disability and higher education. There are number of groups working on the school education of children with disabilities. This has not translated in the entry of students to higher education because of various reasons. Infrastructural facilities within institutions, attitudes towards persons with disabilities, transportation facilities, and lack of support services are a few areas, which hinder the entry of students with disabilities into higher education. People with disabilities face barriers because they have to negotiate an environment which was not designed for them, and if they are to enjoy equality of access it is this deficit in environment which must be overcome. Attitudinal barriers are found to be the major obstacle when it comes to inclusion of students with disability in educational institutions. In a survey, 50% of students with disabilities indicated that faculty members understood their needs, but only 25% of faculty members were willing to change the material covered

in their courses to suit these students' learning needs. Most (82%) of the students indicated that faculty members needed to learn more about disabilities.

STEPS TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ninth Five Year Plan onwards there's a small shift from a welfare based approach to rights based approach towards the persons with disabilities. 3 legislations have been enacted by The Government of India for the benefit of persons with disabilities in the context of education, employment and rehabilitation viz. (i) Rehabilitation Council of India Act in 1992 focused on the human resource development programmes, certification of Rehabilitation professionals in providing rehabilitation services (ii) PwD (Persons with Disability) Act in 1995 highlighted various aspects for persons with disabilities like equal opportunities, protection of their rights, full participation in education, employment and society, it has also talked about barrier free environment, social security too. (iii). National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act (1999) mainly focused on the legal guardianship provisions for of the above four mentioned categories and creation of accessible environment for successful independent living. Tenth five year plan came up with specific provisions which are for students with disabilities who are pursuing higher education through the scheme called Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs(HEPSN) and also mentioned about certain incentives as scholarships for the students with disabilities studying in India and abroad with good academic record in higher education. To ensure adequate financial support for the benefit of students with disabilities, a special financial allotment in the name of 'Component Plan for the Disabled' has been introduced in the various Ministries/ Department's budget. Scholarships were also provided every year during the Tenth five year Plan for students with disabilities pursuing higher and professional courses. The Eleventh five year plan also projected various developmental steps required in the context of higher education of students with disabilities. The 'Disability Division' under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) was planned to strengthen by making a separate department for the effective liaison with all the other concerned Ministries/Departments.

CONCLUSION

Though the Government of India has implemented a scheme of Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) through the University Grants Commission (UGC), a remarkable gap is perceived between policy and practice. Analysis of various literature reviews and case studies of persons with disabilities shows that significant barriers remain in participation of disabled students in higher education. Areas needing particular attention were teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation as well as support services like assistive technology. Appropriate funding mechanisms should be evolved to financially assist universities and higher education institutions to enable them to promote disability inclusion through accommodating and including students with disabilities.

The recent efforts by the ministry of Human Resource Development and University Grants Commission in India may become a shifting motive towards the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in higher education in India. Representation of students with disabilities in the university forums and student union will lead to empowerment and emancipation. Further efforts are needed in terms of more researches and academic teaching of disability studies in the higher education. Most importantly there is need for opening up of equal opportunity cells in the universities so that there is a place in every university which becomes a platform for every student with disability to upgrade their skills and share their experiences. The type of information collected implies that study of participation may need to be geared to the challenges being faced and practices and policies as these impact the students with disabilities. It also implies that reasons for fewer numbers of other disabilities will also need to be studied.

Students with disabilities also have equal rights and entitlements; right against discrimination, right to self-respect and dignity, right to self-assertion and right to freedom being citizen of the country. Education enhances the skills and capabilities of any individual, which leads to comprehensive

development of the individual in many spheres of life. Rights underpinnings in all the schemes, policies, benefits and provisions for students with disabilities in higher education should be given prime importance to address the needs of students with disability in higher education to compete in aspects of the life with typically developed in the society and lead to better and productive life. Their problems and barriers in higher education like Infrastructural facilities in the institutions, attitudes towards persons with disabilities, transportation facilities, provision of assistive devices, support services and financial assistance to be strengthened for the benefit of them.

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